

Guidelines and Tips for Writing Quality Honor Award Nominations

The key to a well-written nomination is providing the readers/evaluators with specific information illustrating how the individual's or group's achievements have had a positive impact on the organization's business or mission goals. The number of examples is not as important as ensuring that the nominee's contributions match the award criteria.

CITATION: The citation is a brief statement that describes accomplishment for which the recipient is receiving the award. The citation will be printed on the certificate and must follow specifications listed below.

- The citation should be no longer than 175 characters long (including spaces).
- The citation should begin with "For outstanding" or "For exceptional." They should NOT begin with "In recognition of."
- The citation should not contain personal pronouns.
- The citation must end with a period.
- Common acronyms (e.g., ISS, SSP, NRO) may be used if the full name is included in the justification, due to the character limitations. (Include the full name or the acronym, but never both.)

JUSTIFICATION: Even though the justification is concise, it should not be vague. Avoid sweeping generalities and make every sentence count. Below is a recommended format for writing a quality honor award nomination. All first references of acronyms should be spelled out.

- **OPENING STATEMENT:** Start with a clear, direct, and specific statement of why the nominee deserves recognition. Include enough information for the panel to become familiar with the nominee's specific challenges faced, actions taken, and results or goals met. List the most important information in the first few sentences and then elaborate as necessary.
- **SUPPORTING STATEMENTS:** Support the opening statement with specific examples that address the award criteria and elaborate on why the nominee's accomplishments are worthy of the award. These examples should include outcomes, results, and/or activities "above and beyond" the nominee's job description. Include qualities that make this person outstanding, and that are clearly relevant to the award criteria (e.g., contribution, teambuilding, collaboration, initiative, and leadership). Consider including the following evidence to answer the "who, what, when, where, why" in your supporting statements:
 - WHAT did the nominee do (e.g., projects, activities)?
 - Projects and/or Activities *above and beyond* the nominee's job description
 - Any challenges or issues encountered and overcome
 - HOW did they do it?
 - Initiative and/or Leadership
 - Teamwork
 - Creativity and/or Innovation
 - Behaviors and/or Attitudes (should not dominate write-up)
 - WHAT were the results and/or impact?
 - What did the nominee's efforts accomplish?
 - Are there specific benefits that NASA derived from those efforts?
- **CLOSING STATEMENT:** Describe how others regard the nominee (e.g., an international expert, a progressive leader, and exceptionally innovative engineer). Mentioning major non-NASA awards and/or the nominee's presentation at a prestigious conference could substantiate this.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:

Well-written nominations are more appealing to the panel of reviewers.

- Write short sentences that are concise and give specific detail.
- Support their nomination with your own observations, as well as qualitative and quantitative facts, statistics, metrics, etc.
- Provide a complete overview of the nominee or team's accomplishments. It is important to tell the nominee's story as you would to a stranger.
- Use an active voice when writing.

Read the criteria carefully.

- Make sure you are nominating the individual or team for the appropriate award.
- Identify at least one or more of the award criteria that the nominee exemplified, then explain how the achievement was outstanding.
- Remember, Agency nominations do not compete against one another, but against the criteria for that award.
- Individual or teams should be nominated for acts that are "above and beyond" their duties, as described in their day-to-day responsibilities.
- If you are unclear about the criteria, ask for clarification.

In providing results, is the contribution an activity or project that is still being developed?

- If the project is still being developed or has not produced results, consider identifying major milestones completed and the impact to the overall outcome. If this progress is not of substantial impact, consider waiting to submit the nomination until after the results/impact can be documented and supported.
- Be sure to include unusual challenges the nominee had to overcome.
- Describe the amount of time and resources spent on the project (e.g., if the project is on time or early, at or under budget)

Create a unique picture of your nominee.

- Solicit information from others to strengthen the nomination.
- Describe unique characteristics that are more than just that the nominee is a great or nice person.
- The review committee is relying on your words to give them a positive, factual picture of your nominee's accomplishments. Explaining detailed behaviors and giving specific examples will make it obvious why someone deserves to be recognized.
- Keep it brief. Too much information that is not relative to the criteria can be harmful. Avoid giving work history or job descriptions, unless it directly relates to the award criteria. The goal is quality, not quantity.
- Consult a thesaurus to find the best adjectives to describe your nominee's unique traits and achievements.

Verify all information in the nomination.

- Nominations should be checked carefully to verify that all information submitted is accurate.
- Ensure that all acronyms are spelled out and are correctly defined, except for common acronyms in the Citation if the full name is included in the Justification.

Know formatting requirements

- Team Name (50 characters including spaces) - printed on certificates.
- Citation (175 characters including spaces) – printed on certificates.
- Justification (3,500 characters including spaces).

For more information, contact your Center Awards Office.

Please note the following disclaimer: The nomination examples are for guidance and/or reference only. Use of any part of the documents is no guarantee of an approved honor award nomination.